

Igneous Rock – A rock that solidified from molten or partially molten material. Examples are solidified lava and plutonic rocks.

Interflow – The lateral movement of water in the unsaturated zone during and immediately after precipitation. Interflow occurs when the zone above a low permeability horizon becomes saturated and lateral flow is initiated parallel to the barrier.

Intermittent Stream – A stream that flows only at certain times of the year, as when it receives water from springs or a surface source. Also known as ephemeral or wet-weather streams.

Isohyetal Line – A line on a map connecting points receiving the same amounts of precipitation.

Joint – A fracture in rock along which there has been no visible movement.

Mafic – An adjective describing igneous rock composed chiefly of dark, ferromagnesian minerals. The complement of felsic.

Metamorphic Rock – A rock formed at depth in the earth's crust from preexisting rocks by mineralogical, chemical and structural changes caused by high temperature, pressure and other factors. Examples include slate, schist and gneiss.

Natural Attenuation – The natural processes contributing to the degradation and dissipation of contaminates. Some of the processes contributing to natural attenuation include dilution, sorption, filtration, oxidation, volatilization, and microbial degradation.

Perched Water Table – The upper surface of a body of unconfined groundwater separated from the main body of groundwater by unsaturated material.

Perennial Stream – A stream that flows continuously throughout the year and whose upper surface generally stands lower than the water table in the region adjoining the stream.

Permeability – The capacity of rock or unconsolidated material to transmit a fluid.

Plume – A body of contaminated groundwater originating from a specific source or sources and influenced by such factors as the local groundwater flow pattern, density of contaminants, and the physical characteristics of the aquifer.

Plutonic – Pertaining to igneous rocks formed at great depth.

Porosity – The ratio of the aggregate volume of interstices in a rock or soil to its total volume. It is usually stated as a percentage.

Potentiometric Surface – An imaginary surface representing the total head of groundwater and defined by the level to which water rises in tightly cased wells. The water table is a particular potentiometric surface.